

No gray profession

Harrison Bryan's memoirs chronicle Australian librarianship 1948-85

Throughout his almost forty years in libraries, Harrison Bryan had an enormous circle of friends and acquaintances. They appear constantly in these pages, enlivening the accounts of library developments and politics with which Harrison was associated



Harrison Bryan in 1978—Librarian of Sydney University and first librarian-in-residence at Kuring-gai CAE.

all his life, and have a whole chapter to themselves at the end of the book.

Why did he become a librarian? It was advice from his Professor that led the young Harrison Bryan to an early decision on his future career, despite a fleeting misgiving that 'a life in librarianship for a full-blooded male seemed to me an exotic suggestion indeed'. So, after wartime service and completing his studies at the University of Queensland, he headed south to the Public

Library of NSW. Here he did his training at John Metcalfe's Library School, and practical work at the University of Sydney library augured one of his future appointments. Immediately on qualifying at the end of 1948 he was offered a post at Queensland University as 'Assistant to the Librarian' and thereafter never looked back. He became the University Librarian only a year later, a position he held until 1963.

From Queensland he was invited to become the Librarian of Sydney University's Fisher Library. Seventeen happy and successful years later, after much persuasion, he agreed to succeed George Chandler as Director General of the National Library of Australia, a position he held from 1980 to 1985. Harrison's account of his achievements in these posts, and his insights (always fair, but sometimes startlingly frank) into the people with whom he worked and their contributions, make a fascinating tale covering the span of some of Australian librarianship's most eventful years. If you have any interest at all in what lies behind the history of our profession, this is a book not to be missed. ■

Available from the publisher, Auslib Press, PO Box 622, Blackwood SA 5051. No gray profession by Harrison Bryan (233 pp, ISBN 1 875145 30 3) costs \$34 plus \$6 p/b.

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